

## Director's Monthly Message: Janel L. Forde



This week, we celebrated Labor Day. On the first Monday in September each year, we pay tribute to the contributions

and achievements of American workers and Illinois can claim that it is the birthplace of the American labor movement and that heritage is one we proudly celebrate.

The movement is recognized by many as beginning in 1886 at a labor rally in Chicago's Haymarket Square as workers fought for the establishment of the eight-hour work day. Workers later advocated for the idea of a "workingmen's holiday" to be celebrated in September, and it soon caught on in other industrial centers across the country. In 1894, employees of the Pullman Car Company in Chicago went on strike to protest wage cuts. In an effort to settle the unrest and repair relations with the now-unionized workers, Congress passed an act making Labor Day a legal holiday.

Labor Day also marks the end of the Summer season. Historically speaking, the standard that school began for children after Labor Day is no longer true in the vast majority of districts in Illinois. Dozens of districts started school in mid-August, marking for some the earliest starting dates ever. The thinking in moving up the start of the school year is to provide students a longer winter break, rather than having them finishing projects and testing well into December. And, with Illinois' unpredictable weather, cold and snow day school closures can often push the school year further into the following summer season.

Labor Day provides families another opportunity to be together before the school routine truly sets in. For many parents who work in the private sector, the holiday is a reminder that their business' focus soon turns to fourth quarter results.

We can consider it a call to action as well. We should all revisit the goals we set out to accomplish and devise a roadmap for meeting them in these final 120 days or so remaining in 2019.

House and Senate committee and legislative hearings began August 29th and conclude September 29th, so the month is always filled with activity at the Capitol.



It is not uncommon around the Labor Day holiday to hear the phrase, "Where did the summer go?" Time may pass quickly, so in the spirit of Labor Day, I want to recognize all of your efforts, and on behalf of the entire CMS leadership team, thank you for your dedication to the important work we undertake at the Illinois Department of Central Management Services.

Take the time this week to thank those who work for you - as well as your colleagues - for their contributions and partnership.

# Business Enterprise Program Continues to Evolve to Meet its Mission

Illinois, as in all corners of American culture, benefits from the strength of a diverse, multi-ethnic population, one that is representative of the strengths and contributions of all its people, without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, creed or disability. It is the strength of America's diversity that brings to bear some of the greatest advances in technology, business, healthcare, and creative-problem solving across our society.

Without access to participating in our economic systems and structures, minority businesses are not only deprived of proportional financial benefit, but the State misses their contribution of ideas and perspectives that undoubtedly strengthens Illinois. The goal of the **Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** is to promote the economic development of small businesses in Illinois owned by Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities.

To proactively accomplish that objective, State agencies and universities have goals set out to buy certain percentages of goods and services from BEP-certified businesses. To qualify for the program, a business must validate that it is at least 51 percent owned by such individuals, be a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, and have gross annual sales of less than \$75 million.

**"How we promote the (Business Enterprise) Program says a lot about the value and importance we place on inclusiveness. By providing a direct linkage to the Bureau of Strategic Sourcing, we demonstrate in word and action that we are sincere in our advocacy for historically disadvantaged businesses."**

*- Acting Director Janel L. Forde*

Upon her arrival, with fresh eyes on the program, **Director Janel L. Forde** recognized a reality: "It seemed only logical that a program that fosters growth among small businesses led by often disadvantaged groups should be linked to our sourcing function," she explained. With that, Director Forde ordered the BEP program re-organized to be aligned with the **Bureau of Strategic Sourcing (BoSS.)**



**Michael Merchant**, CMS's **Assistant Director**, now has among other responsibilities, oversight of both the Bureau of Strategic Sourcing, as well as the Business Enterprise Program. Mike summed up the goal of the realignment this way: "If we want to promote small business – and

specifically among these groups of qualified vendors – we need to make doing business with the State as easy as possible. The synergy created by tying BEP to BOSS's operations goes a long way toward reducing red tape."

In Fiscal Year 2018, the BEP delivered record results with the State of Illinois, spending over \$600 million with BEP certified vendors, the highest annual BEP spend since the program's inception in 2016, and a 23 percent increase over Fiscal Year 2017. Over half of all BEP-certified vendors participated in State contracts, totaling over 3,200 contracts in Fiscal Year 2018.

One tool that BEP can use to promote equity in State procurement is to identify and declare a "sheltered market." Sheltered markets may be created to set aside a percentage of contracting in industry-specific areas for BEP-eligible businesses. The first sheltered market was previously created to successfully promote minority business in State contracting for information technology (IT) goods and services. The Business Enterprise Council declared its second Sheltered Market in August 2018, targeting contracted goods and services aimed at State agency marketing efforts.

"Imagine the opportunities we can unlock for minority marketing and advertising firms to do new business with the State," Merchant said, adding, "Seventy State agencies, along with universities and community colleges need to promote their programs and get their messages out to the public, whether it is through mailing campaigns, outdoor advertising or what have you. This new sheltered market will improve equity for minority businesses in this (marketing industry) space."

## Safety Corner – Let's Get Prepared

When a damaging storm or other emergency strikes, do you know what to do? Is your home prepared? Do you have all necessary supplies? If you are at work, where do you go?

Knowing the answers to these questions can help keep you and your family safe. That is why this month's Safety Corner focuses on National Preparedness Month. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), "National Preparedness Month is recognized each September to promote family and community disaster and emergency planning now and throughout the year." The theme for this year is *Prepared, Not Scared*.

There are many ways to ensure that you are prepared for an emergency. **Diane Hoots, CMS's Emergency Management Coordinator**, emphasizes that everyone should have a personal plan for themselves and their family. Knowing how to take care of yourself and your family in the event of an emergency when first responders may not be able to reach you is crucial to staying safe.

When developing a plan, it can be a challenge to know where to begin. Diane points to [www.ready.illinois.gov](http://www.ready.illinois.gov) as a vital resource. As part of the **Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)**, the site outlines how to plan and prepare including designating locations to meet, making copies of important documents, and locating gas mains and other utilities. It also provides instruction on how to create an emergency supply kit and a "GO bag." What should be included in both the emergency supply kit and GO bag are listed on the site.

In addition to encouraging everyone to think about preparing their home and family for an emergency, CMS is always working to keep employees safe. This is primarily



done through an Emergency Action Plan (EAP). According to **Kevin Dwyer, Policy Advisor/Supt. of Operations** for Agency Services, "The purpose of an EAP is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. Well-developed emergency plans and proper employee training, such that employees understand their roles and responsibilities within the plan, will result in fewer employee injuries and less structural damage to facilities during emergencies."

EAPs focus sharply on facility evacuations plans. Dwyer explained, "CMS facility managers review and update facility evacuation plans at State of Illinois buildings. As an occupant of a building, you can prepare for evacuation by familiarizing yourself with your site emergency exit locations, specific evacuation routes, and designated meeting areas after evacuation." And just as in your home, "You should consider the items you will quickly take with you in the event of an evacuation. A 'GO bag' should be close by ready to grab quickly packed with essential belongings; such as medications, identification, mobile phones," he concluded. Hoots echoed this sentiment, expressing that she hopes everyone is mindful of what the evacuation plans in place are and knowing how they will evacuate if necessary.

National Preparedness Month reminds us to address these plans now to ensure the safety of ourselves, our colleagues, and our families. If there is an emergency, we all need to know what to do.



## Noteworthy September Observations

**Labor Day:** Observed on the first Monday in September, celebrates the achievements of American workers.

**Native American Day:** Always celebrated on the 4th Friday of September.

**Grandparent's Day:** Observed on the first Sunday after Labor Day.



**Sept 11:** Recognizes the more than 3,000 people who lost their lives during what the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil in 2001. It is also a day to honor the sacrifices of first-responders and the service men and women of our Armed Forces.

**Constitution Day:** Sept. 17, celebrates the ratification of the document that governs the United States.

**Autumn Equinox:** On or around September 22nd is the traditional transition from summer into fall.

## Illinois Events

**Sept. 5:** 2019 NFL Kickoff and 100th season of the Chicago Bears as they play the Green Bay Packers in Chicago.

**Sept. 12:** 21st Annual Harvest Celebration at the University of Illinois – Springfield Student Union. Event raises money for the Central Illinois Foodbank to fight hunger in central and southern Illinois.

<https://www.centralilfoodbank.org/blog/Harvest-Celebration>

**Sept. 14:** Donuts and Dogs 5K Fun Run and Walk Fundraiser, Southwind Park, Springfield.

[https://events.illinoistimes.com/events/view/218557/donuts\\_and\\_dogs\\_5k\\_fun\\_run-walk\\_fundraiser\\_.html](https://events.illinoistimes.com/events/view/218557/donuts_and_dogs_5k_fun_run-walk_fundraiser_.html)

**Sept. 19 - 22:** EXPO Chicago, the International Exposition of Contemporary & Modern Art, at historic Navy Pier, presenting artwork from 140 leading galleries, representing countries and cities from around the world.

**Sept. 20 - 22:** Peoria Oktoberfest under the big tent, Riverfront Park. <https://oktoberfestpeoria.com>

**Sept. 21 - 22:** Rockford's World War II Days at Midway Village Museum is the largest World War II era re-enactment in the United States. <https://www.gorockford.com/event/world-war-ii-days/17228/>

**Sept. 22:** The Quad Cities Marathon in East Moline. <http://qcmarathon.org/>

**Sept. 25 - Nov. 20:** State Employees and Universities Combined Appeal (SECA) Annual Campaign. Donate to charitable causes of your choice. <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/SECA/Pages/default.aspx>

## Employee of the Month: Nina Pickrel, Division of Accounting



September's Employee of the Month is someone that almost 500 CMS employees will soon come to appreciate as much as CMS's acting **Chief Financial Officer, Karen Pape**, the nominating manager for her recognition. Karen explained, "**Nina Pickrel**, CMS's Payroll Manager

in our **Division of Accounting** is fabulous and deserves to be recognized. In addition to keeping doing all routine bi-weekly payroll activities, Nina has also put in long hours to ensure that we (CMS) meet our September 16th deadline. That is the date when we must send the Comptroller all correct calculations for backpay and interest due to each bargaining unit employee."

**Tricia Pineda** in the **Bureau of Personnel** adds, "Nina is always very thorough, and she and her team work very closely with us in Personnel on this backpay effort; she asks a lot of insightful, timely questions." In addition to doing the payroll for CMS, Nina is also responsible for the **Illinois Gaming Board's** payroll. "Whereas CMS is paid on the 10th and 25th, Gaming (Board's) pay periods fall on the 13th and 28th, so it is a never-ending treadmill," Pickrel explained, adding, "That is why we look forward to closing this chapter on backpay this month, to everyone's satisfaction."

The lifelong Springfield-area resident began her career in State government working in the public information office of the **State Lottery**. She said, "I started with the State in 2000, and with a background in commercial banking, I eventually found my way into the payroll operations in the **Department of Revenue**. After that shared services model was eliminated at Revenue, I moved to CMS and I am glad to be a part of this team."



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